

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 122726

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UN, PLO, IS, LE

SUBJECT: UNIFIL PROBLEMS

1. USYG URQUHART REACHED LEONARD AT DEPARTMENT MAY 13, AT WALDHEIM'S REQUEST, TO CONVEY UN NY CONCERN OVER MILITARY AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS FACING UNIFIL. HE SUMMARIZED SILASVUO-EITAN CONVERSATION OF PREVIOUS DAY WHICH STILL DID NOT PRODUCE ANYTHING RESEMBLING FIRM DATE FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. SILASVUO HAS ALREADY TOLD PRESS THAT NO DATE
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WAS FIXED AND URQUHART EXPECTS THAT THIS WILL INFLAME ARABS IN NEW YORK AND LEAD TO COUNCIL MEETING SHORTLY. POLITICAL BASIS FOR UNIFIL COULD THUS BE BADLY DAMAGED IN NEAR FUTURE.

2. AT SAME TIME, URQUHART IS EVEN MORE CONCERNED ABOUT SITUATION UNIFIL FACES ON THE GROUND. HE SAYS THIS CONCERN

IS HELD VERY STRONGLY BY FRENCH. GUIRINGAUD WAS ON TELEPHONE THREE TIMES YESTERDAY TO WALDHEIM AND URQUHART, INCLUDING ONE CONVERSATION WITH LATTER OF MORE THAN ONE HOUR. HE TELLS URQUHART THAT FRENCH CONTACTS WITH PLO HAVE NOT PRODUCED SATISFACTORY ASSURANCES AND FRENCH ARE EXTREMELY CONCERNED ABOUT PUBLIC OPINION IN FRANCE TOWARD UNIFIL. FRENCH AUTHORITIES WANT TO PULL OUT OF TYRE BUT RECOGNIZE NEGATIVE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES THIS WOULD HAVE.

THEY ARE ALSO EXTREMELY UNHAPPY WITH LOCATION OF UNIFIL HEADQUARTERS IN ISRAELI-CONTROLLED TERRITORY AT NAQOURA, BUT AT THE MOMENT THERE IS NO VIABLE ALTERNATIVE. THEY VERY MUCH FEAR ATTACKS FROM REJECTIONIST PALESTINIANS AND LEBANESE LEFTISTS WHICH WOULD UNDERCUT POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN UNIFIL.

3. LEONARD ASKED WHETHER IMPROVING EQUIPMENT OF UNIFIL WOULD BE USEFUL IN REDUCING DANGER FROM REJECTIONIST ATTACKS. URQUHART STRONGLY REJECTED THIS IDEA WHICH HE SAID HAD ALSO BEEN PUT FORWARD BY SILASVUO. UNIFIL COULD NOT SURVIVE POLITICALLY ANY SORT OF MILITARY CONFRONTATION WITH PALESTINIANS, URQUHART SAID, AND ONLY SOLUTION TO PROBLEM IS POLITICAL PRESSURES FROM OTHER ARABS. LEONARD POINTED OUT THIS IS LINE ON WHICH U.S. AND ITS FRIENDS IS ACTING AND URQUHART EXPRESSED APPRECIATION AND HOPE THAT RESULTS CAN BE ACHIEVED SOONEST. HE ALSO UNDERLINED, CONFIDENTIAL

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HOWEVER, NEED TO MOVE ISRAELIS SO THAT UN AND WEST HAVE SOMETHING MORE TO SHOW ARABS IN INDUCING BETTER BEHAVIOR FROM ARAB SIDE.

4. URQUHART ALSO DESCRIBED DIFFICULT BIND UN IS IN BETWEEN ISRAELI PRESSURE ON UN TO RECOGNIZE HADDAD AS LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF LEBANESE AUTHORITY IN SOUTH LEBANON AND LEBANESE GOVERNMENT UNWILLINGNESS TO DEAL WITH HADDAD EFFECTIVELY ALONG THIS LINE OR ANY OTHER. HE NOTED THAT UN WILL CONTINUE TO DEAL WITH HADDAD ON SAME DE FACTO BASIS AS IT DEALS WITH PLO, BUT THAT ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM CHRISTIAN AREAS WILL PROBABLY REQUIRE SOME RESOLUTION OF THIS SITUATION. VANCE

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